

# Dealing with constipation in children



**If your child has had:**

- Fewer than 3 bowel movements in a week.
- Hard, dry and unusually large stools.
- Bowel movements that are difficult to pass.

**Your child may be constipated.**

## **Causes of constipation in young children**

- Changing from breast milk or formula to cow's milk
- Not eating enough fiber in the diet
- Drinking or eating too many milk products
- Not drinking enough water or fruit juices
- Holding back due to remembering previous painful bowel movements
- After being sick or a side-effect of certain medications

## **Call your family doctor if:**

- Your child has not had a bowel movement after eating more fiber foods, increasing liquids and reducing milk for 3 days
- You have any concerns or questions

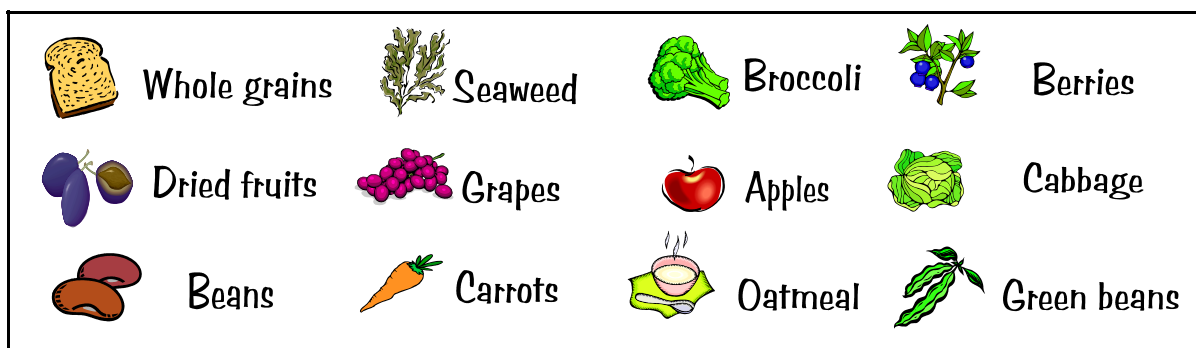
# 3 Things That Can Help Your Child



## 1. Diet

- Increase fluid intake by including water and fruit juices
- Give your child 4 ounces of prune juice a day
- Be aware of types of foods that may cause constipation, like milk and cheese
- Include more fiber foods, like whole grain products, fruits and vegetables

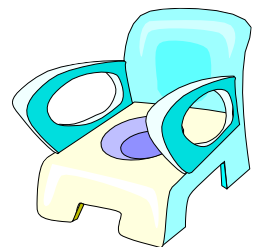
### Good sources of fiber



## 2. Bowel habit training

Start your child on regular bowel habits.

- Asking them to sit on the toilet for at least 10 minutes
  - the same time everyday, **and/or**
  - right after every meal



## 3. Medicine

- There are many laxatives that treat constipation in children of different ages.
- Ask your family doctor for a suggested brand and the correct amount to use.
- **Do not** give over-the-counter medications or laxatives unless your doctor tells you to.

For more information, contact a dietitian in Health Education at 729-2689.

